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RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0819  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0189  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 4465  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 6554  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000646

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/19/2016  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#)  
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS "NEGATIVE  
INCENTIVES" NEEDED TO BRING TIGERS BACK TO THE TABLE

REF: A. COLOMBO 634

[1](#)B. COLOMBO 601

Classified By: AMB. JEFFREY J. LUNSTEAD. REASON: 1.4 (B,D).

[1](#)1. (C) Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera met with the Ambassador on April 20 to discuss latest developments on the peace process. Foreign Secretary H.M.G.S. Palihakkara and GSL Peace Secretariat head Palitha Kohona also participated in the meeting. The Foreign Minister said that he had "heard" through media reports that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had refused to attend April 24 talks in Geneva, but was awaiting further details from Norwegian Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer, who returned from Kilinochchi later that afternoon (Ref A). The Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) had worked hard to resolve the transportation issue, but the Tigers had apparently rejected the offer, Samaraweera said. The next challenge is to keep the Tigers talking. When asked by Hanssen-Bauer, whom the Foreign Minister described as "very reasonable," what the GSL options are should talks fall through, Samaraweera said that he had responded that talks were the only option.

[1](#)2. (C) Getting the LTTE back to the table in February was an achievement due in large part to US efforts, the Foreign Minister continued, including strong statements from the Ambassador and U/S Burns. "I sincerely believe the US played a huge role with its formidable, straightforward stance" against terrorism, Samaraweera commented. The international community should assist the GSL again by putting pressure on the Tigers "in no uncertain terms" to resume dialogue, he said, including through such "negative incentives" as a terrorist designation by the EU. He reported that earlier that day he had requested the Dutch Ambassador (representing the EU presidency) to move that forward. Another such "negative incentive could be curbing the flow of funds from the Tamil diaspora, which is the Tigers' "lifeline." "Nothing else will hurt them," Samaraweera stressed. Should the LTTE agree to resume dialogue, there could be positive incentives, he suggested, such as local and provincial council elections.

13. (C) The Ambassador responded that the EU was now grappling with the issue of whether to list the Tigers. A prospective terrorist listing works best as a negative incentive before it is actually invoked, he observed. On the other hand, the Tigers' terrorist tactics could not be ignored, and the EU might face a credibility problem if it continued to threaten a listing without ever taking action. With respect to LTTE financing, the Ambassador said the US was looking hard at this issue, but would need to build a legal case to take any action. He also noted US efforts to assist the GSL in setting up a Financial Intelligence Unit at the Central Bank to track funding sources. The Foreign Minister expressed concern that the Co-Chairs meeting, originally scheduled to be held in Tokyo on April 24, had been postponed. The Ambassador agreed that a meeting soon is needed, but noted the difficulty in finding a date and venue mutually agreeable to all principals.

14. (C) To try to obtain the moral high ground in the February round of talks in Geneva, the LTTE had brought up the paramilitary issue, but the fact that the paramilitaries often work at cross-purposes with the GSL (e.g., the December 24 killing of Tamil National Alliance parliamentarian Joseph Pararajasingham) proves that there is no GSL support, the Foreign Minister insisted. He added that President Rajapaksa had been "very adamant" in the April 19 Security Council meeting that no one in the GSL or military have any links with paramilitaries. The GSL must take a positive, pro-active approach on the paramilitaries, the Ambassador responded. It is not enough merely to say that no GSL entities have contact with them; their continued existence suggests GSL acquiescence, which hurts government credibility and only gives the LTTE ammunition to attack GSL sincerity.

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He referred the Foreign Minister to a video clip (available on the pro-LTTE website TamilNet) done by an Australian newscaster who met with Karuna paramilitaries and visited their camp in GSL-controlled territory with apparent ease.

15. (C) Remarking gloomily that "we're bracing ourselves for more violence," the Foreign Minister said he was concerned that the Tigers were trying to create a communal backlash by inciting ethnic tensions. "Sinhala goons" had done some damage after the April 12 bombing of a vegetable market in Trincomalee (Ref B), but the GSL had stepped in quickly to defuse the situation. The Ambassador underscored the need for continued GSL vigilance to ensure there was no repeat of the 1983 pogroms.

16. (C) Comment: The GSL seems at a loss on what to do next to keep the Tigers at the table, and is looking to the international community to help hold the peace process together. We should have more information on the LTTE perspective after Hanssen-Bauer and Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar brief the Co-Chairs on their visit to Kilinochchi later in the evening April 20.  
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